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NOTES FROM THE MEDICAL PRESS

IN CHARGE OF

ELIZABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL



EYESTRAIN AND CRIME.—At the annual meeting of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and Otolaryngology, Dr. George M. Case, Elmira, N. Y., urged the necessity of the examination of the eyes of inmates of penal institutions and especially of reformatories and schools for incorrigibles. He stated that a large percentage of the young criminals of New York have strikingly high ocular defects. He considered eyestrain as a contributing factor in truancy in school, disinclination to work and inebriety. He believed that routine examination of the eyes of school children would do much toward the prevention of criminal tendencies and would elevate the standard of civilization, and considered that state appropriations should be made for this purpose. The managers and superintendents of institutions should be informed as to the baneful results of eyestrain in the production of crime.

TYPHOID INFECTION CONVEYED BY A CONVALESCENT INFANT.—Dr. Thomas S. Southworth, New York, read this paper at a meeting of the American Pediatric Society. He reported two house epidemics in two different cities, the connecting link being a child of a few months, convalescing from typhoid fever. During convalescence entered a house where there had been no typhoid, and in two weeks after arrival two other children were attacked with typhoid and later a third. He deprecated the habit of allowing convalescing patients to go around without any instructions as to care of discharges; this was especially applicable to children. He thought these reports threw some light upon what were often regarded as sporadic cases. The infection was conveyed by the bacteria still in the urine or stools.

Dr. D. L. Edsall, Philadelphia, had failed to find in a careful inquiry in a large number of cases that the majority of doctors gave their patients any instructions at all, even during the course of the disease, that bear upon contact infection. In having a careful examination made into the records in over 200 cases at the Episcopal Hospital he had found that contact infection was indicated in 17 per cent. of the cases; there was a suggestion of it in 25 per cent.

HABITUAL CONSTIPATION.—Dr. C. F. Spivak, in an interesting paper published in the *Medical Record*, controverts many established ideas on this subject. He says: "Humanity is undergoing profound changes in regard to dietetics. We may consider the last century as a transition period. At no time in the past have the civilized nations consumed so much meat, eggs, milk, and especially sugar as during the last century, and the use of the latter article is growing from year to year. The number of predigested, prepared, dextrinized foods is increasing daily. The high efficiency of the dental art and the greater stress laid upon the proper mastication of food, all these factors produce certain changes in the human organism, which manifest themselves by a reduced quantity of the fecal matter and less frequent need for emptying the bowels. The tendency of civilized life in general and of modern dietetics in particular is toward the production of lesser quantities of fecal matter and less frequent intervals of evacuation."

POSTOPERATIVE RETENTION OF URINE, says the *University of Pennsylvania Medical Bulletin*, is treated as follows by Anspach: If retention of urine is persistent the recommendation of Baisch is adopted, viz., a catheter is inserted into the distended bladder, and as soon as the urine begins to flow the catheter is compressed and 20 c.c. of a 25 per cent. solution of boroglyceride is injected into the bladder. The catheter is then withdrawn. Urine is usually voided spontaneously after this procedure, and in very many cases no further difficulty is experienced.

THE MICROBE OF WHOOPING COUGH.—The correspondent of the *Sun* in Antwerp says that Dr. Gengou, of the Belgian Royal Medical College, reports the discovery of the whooping-cough microbe. It is said to resemble Pfeiffer's influenza bacillus.

INSOMNIA.—Dr. Norman Bridge, in a thoughtful article in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, says that people give themselves too much concern about not sleeping and keep themselves awake by their very anxiety to sleep. Rest in bed in a horizontal position is necessary for the body, and this is the important point. Sleep is much less important and a sufficient quantity will be obtained if the mind is kept quiet and not in a constant state of anxiety and worry over the hours spent in wakefulness. To obviate noises that disturb,

he recommends the insertion of a plug of paraffine wax in the ears. Warm feet, fresh air and a good bed induce sleep.

DEFINITION OF HYSTERIA.—The Journal of the American Medical Association, quoting from *Berliner Klinische Wochenschrift*, says: "Kronthal argues that hysteria cannot be regarded as a nervous affection. It is the varying morbid reaction of the cells constituting the individual. Treatment should aim to influence the morbidly reacting cells by changing the environment and by strengthening the cells—the benefit from which has long been established empirically."

STOMACH OF THE INFANT.—The *New York Medical Journal*, in a synopsis of a paper in *La Presse Médicale*, says: "Leven and Barret describe the stomach of the infant as quite different from that of the adult in several particulars. Its position is transverse with its greater curvature practically horizontal and forming its lower border, while that of the adult is rather vertical with its greater curvature forming its left border. The lower limit of the infant's stomach is formed by a portion of its greater curvature, that of the adult by the region of the pylorus. The stomach of the adult adapts itself normally to the dimensions and volume of its contents, while the condition of that of the infant rather resembles that characteristic of dilatation in the adult. The contractions made by the stomach to evacuate its contents into the pylorus in the infant are of different characters from those which take place in the adult. The time required by the stomach of the infant to dispose of from 80 to 175 c.c. of milk varies from one and three-quarters to two hours."

AN UNEXPLAINED FEBRIL AFFECTION WITH THE HIGHEST TEMPERATURE REPORTED TO DATE.—The *Interstate Medical Journal* has the following item quoted from a German contemporary: "The remarkable case reported by Heller was one of fracture of one rib, concussion and probable infection of the cord. The highest temperature (taken with 7 thermometers) registered 49.9° C. (122° F.) axillæ. It remained at 45°–47° C. for seven days and was not below 42.2° (108° F.) for seven weeks. During the entire time the patient did not experience any other symptoms. The pulse was never over 120 and complete recovery was the ultimate result."